

Weekly Situation Report
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS)
April 22, 2003
From: Billy Causey

HOT TOPICS AND HEADS UP:

This week Sanctuary Superintendent Billy Causey and Science Coordinator Dr. Brian Keller will participate in a meeting of the FKNMS Technical Advisory Committee to review the Special Studies projects to be funded by EPA, NOAA and Sanctuary Friends of the Florida Keys. Later this week, Brian will participate in a one-day outing to an expedition on the Oculina Banks off Cape Canaveral.

Upper Region Manager, LCDR Dave Score, participated in the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary fish monitoring workshop in Savannah, GA last week.

LCDR Dave Score will be representing FKNMS at the Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team meeting at the South Florida Water Management District's Miami Field Office on May 1.

This past weekend there were 6 Adopt-A-Reef and 4 Monofilament Line Clean Ups scheduled in the Florida Keys. The weather was awful with heavy rains and high winds so some of the clean-ups will be rescheduled for next weekend. These programs are sponsored by The Ocean Conservancy, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and local businesses. Volunteers receive a discount on trips from the businesses and the Sanctuary provides the equipment (clippers and bags).

The Florida Marine Science Educators Association (FMSEA) conference will be held in the Keys this coming weekend (May 2-4). FKNMS is sponsoring a Coral Reef Classroom field trip on Friday afternoon, Billy Causey is the keynote speaker on Friday evening, and FKNMS will have a booth with educational materials. Mary Tagliareni and Alex Score will be leading a discussion on CERP and the South Florida Ecosystem during a concurrent session. Sanctuary Education Specialist Nancy Diersing will be giving a presentation as well. Nancy's powerpoint program will provide an overview of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary's science program and recent research findings about corals, water quality, and seagrass ecology.

Joy Tatgenhorst will be representing FKNMS at the Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program (MRRP) meeting being held in Marathon on Tuesday, April 29. MRRP is dedicated to reducing the environmental damage caused by discarded fishing line. MRRP educational materials include posters (with artwork donated by Guy Harvey), fliers, brochures, PowerPoint presentations, and public service announcements.

On April 22, Mary Tagliareni participated in a conference call for the US Coral Reef Task Force as a Federal Navigator for the development of Local Action Strategies (LAS). Mary is the Florida Federal Navigator for the "Lack of Awareness" issue group. The kick-off meeting for the Florida LAS program will be May 27 -29 in Ft. Lauderdale.

Mary Tagliareni has provided a draft of the FKNMS Lower Region Site brochure to the Lower region staff for review.

Mary Tagliareni, FKNMS Volunteer Coordinator was interviewed by Kevin Wadlow of the Keynoter for an article on Loretta Lawrence. Loretta Lawrence was named a "2003 Environmental Hero."

This week, RPM Nautical Foundation is conducting a remote sensing survey of the Turtle Reef area in the Upper Keys for submerged cultural resources. RPM is a nonprofit scientific and educational organization specializing in shipwreck survey. Archeologist Corey Malcom is serving as the principle investigator on the project with a team of two technicians utilizing a specially outfitted vessel for shallow water remote sensing. Data collected during the project will be processed by RPM staff and supplied to FKNMS.

LR DARP team leader Anne McCarthy completed the Restoration Plan for the Newfound Harbor restoration/ enhancement project. The project was also discussed on USI Radio "Morning Magazine" with Bill Becker on Tuesday, April 29, 2003. In support of this project, LR team members Russell Reardon and Alicia Stevenson purchased and prepared materials (1500 lbs of cement bags and 1500 lbs of sand bags) for NFH restoration/ enhancement project. These materials are in addition to 7500 pounds of limestone rock obtained by Harold Hudson, Russell Reardon, Alicia Stevenson and TJ Pacot from a quarry in South Miami.

Anne McCarthy and Russell Reardon took percentage cover video in hardbottom habitat in the backcountry near illegal lobster attractant (casitas) in efforts to identify the possibility and feasibility for a compensatory restoration project for the Belle Watling.

The USACE hosted a public meeting on the Key West Harbor dredging on 22 April at Banana Bay in Key West. FKNMS resource specialist Lauri MacLaughlin, LR Operations manager Steve Baumgartner, and LR Manager Fritz Wettstein represented FKNMS at this meeting. The meeting provided a point by point review of the proposed conditions of the ACOE permit for the project.

LR DARP team member Russell Reardon prepared a summary of costs and package of information on DONE DEAL for the State's Attorneys office.

Coupon Bight Aquatic Preserve Manager Alicia Stevenson will participate in a panel discussion on the removal of exotic species (specifically Australian Pine) from Ft Zachary Taylor park. The panel discussion will be held on 29 April at 7pm in Old City Hall.

Last week, Brian Keller participated in a grant proposal review panel for FKNMS Special Studies, which discussed and ranked 18 proposals. He also met with the FKNMS management team to discuss funding decisions for the top-ranked projects. He joined a field trip and discussion organized by The Nature Conservancy to familiarize several Congressional staffers with water quality issues in the Keys.

On 4/24/03, FKNMS Resource Managers John Halas and Bill Goodwin, with the help of Sanctuary Submerged Cultural Resource Inventory volunteers Dennis Trelewicz, Casey Bates and Hyatt Hodgetts, conducted a survey of the Magulla grounding site with underwater metal detectors to assess the likelihood of the presence of buried artifacts before restoration treatments are implemented. In this particular case, exclusion cages are to be installed to facilitate recolonization and regrowth of seagrasses by exclusion of herbivory from various fishes, sea turtles and invertebrates. Although a number of metallic objects of recent manufacture were found (presumably dropped from the Magulla while aground), no historic artifacts were detected.

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

Lower Region Team OCEAN coordinator John Nazzaro presented an introduction on the FKNMS to new Navy personnel at the Navy Indoctrination at Boca Chica on Monday, 28 April 2003.

The Sanctuary Education staff sponsored an educational station at the 4th annual Ocean Day, coordinated by the Dolphin Research Center on Grassy Key. Elementary students from throughout the Keys visited the Sanctuary's station where they engaged in coral reef awareness activities conducted by Sanctuary Education Specialists Joy Tatgenhorst and Nancy Diersing.

CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Nothing to report.